STATEMENT BY MINISTER ACCIDENTIAL DEATHS IN A FEW DISTRICT OF RAJASTHAN ON ACCOUNT OF CONTAMINATED SKO

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): Sir, with great sorrow, I wish to inform the House of the unfortunate incident in certain parts of Rajasthan in which 27 persons so far have lost their lives and a number of persons injured as result of the use of contaminated kerosene.

2. An intimation was received from 3 State Government of Rajasthan telephonically in the evening of 9th March, 1994, informing about some deaths in Jhalawar and Baran districts of Rajasthan on account of accidents occurring due to the use of kerosene by persons in their houses, etc. Senior Officers of the IOC from Northern Region Head Office Delhi and an Officer of Oil Industry Safety Directorate were directed to proceed to Rajasthan immediately and investigate into the matter in association with the State Governmen officials and also take action for withdrawal of suspected contaminated SKO for preventing any similar accidents. Executive Director, Northern Region of IOC and officers • from Head Office, IOC, Bombay also reached Kota and carried out investigations. IOC constituted an Internal Committee headed by General Manager (Markg. Operations), Northern Region to conduct the enquiry and find out the cause of accidents and the contamination of SKO, etc. As later, reports of more deaths came in, it was considered necesary to appoint a high level. Enquiry Committee. Accordingly, an Enquiry Committee has been constituted by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, consisting of the following officers:—

(4) Executive Director, Oil Industry Safety Directorate- Chairman.

(ii) A representative of Chief Controller of Explosives; Member

(iii.) Shri S. K. Khosla:, GM (O and M), IBP Co., Bombay. Member.

(iv) Shri R. K. Mulla, GM (Ops.), HO, HPCL; Bombay. Member.

(v) A representative of State Government of Rajasthan. : Member

3. The terms of reference of enquiry by the Enquiry Committee with be as follows:—

(i) To establish the cause (s) of deaths and other injuries due to the accidents on account of use of kerosene.

(ii) To determine the nature and causes of accidents.

(iii) Source of supply of SKO causing accidents and its mode of transportation distribution and sale to the consumers.

(iv) Whether the IOC and BPC officials followed the instructions on quality control and safety precautions and other procedures prescribed in the operations Manual, particularly, in view of the instructions issued after accidents in Cochin.

(v) To determine responsibility of persons on account of whose negligence the accidents accured.

(vi) To suggest measures to prevent such accidents and happenings in future.

(vii) Any other relevant matters.

4. According to the information collected from the State Government, 27 persons are reported to have died on account of the accidents by use of contaminated SKO. 225 persons got burn injuries, put the which 85 are still in hospitals. The districts affected are Jabalwar, Baran, Kota, Bundi and Chittorgarh.

5. The State of Police of Rajasthan have registered criminal cases against the officuals of the IOC operating the Kota Depot of IOC, from where the SKO was issued. The Three officers of IOC including the Senior Depot Manager and one Khalasi, managing the operations at IOC, Kota Depot, have been arrested. According to the Police, the officials have admitted their failure and responsibility for issuing contaminated SKO from the Depot.

6. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, was also deputed to Rajasthan to ensure retrieval of contaminated SKO and restoration of distribution of on—spec SKO fin consultation with senior officals of State Government. As far as could be ascertained, it appears that there was some mix-up of petrol in kerosene in the operation of decanting of SKO and petrol from the railway tank wagons in the SKO and petrol tanks at Kota Depot of IOC. Reports of the deaths during handling of kerosene at a retail dealer's premises were received on 18th February, 1994. The incident was however not pursued to its logical end treating it is as an accdent. It appears that after initial mistake and reports of deaths, IOC officials at Kota Depot tried to cover up the mistake in the decanting operation, in the depot between 15th February and 18th February, 1994 and did not take necessary action to isolate the product and not to issue it. Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas willfully cooperate in the investigtion of the cases by the State Police and also take stringent action against the guilty officials found responsible for negligence and non observance of prescribed safety precautions, etc.

7. In consultation with and with the assistance of State Government machinery, the contaminated SKO is being withdrawn from the retailers and wholesalers by the IOC and being stored separately for further investigation etc. So far, a total of 190 KLs of contaminated SKO has been retrieved. Fresh stocks of SKO are available to Kota Depot and will be issued to the wholesalers at the instructions of the State Government officials. It is learnt that some ex-gratia payment has been made by the State Government to the next of kin of the deceased perssons. I have directed IOC, irrespective of their responsibility to irrespective of their responsibility to pay Rs. 1 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and other appropriate amounts for the injured in consultation with the State Government. Further steps are being taken by the oil companies to prevent such happenings and accidents by ensuring strict compliance of laid down instructions on quality control and safety regulations and checks.

8. As the Parliament was closed from 10th to 14th March, 1994, the House could not be informed earlier.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुरः (उत्तर प्रदेश) : श्रीमन् यह काफी लंबा-चौड़ा वक्तव्य है, लेकिन यह बात समझ में नहीं आ रही कि एक के बाद दूसरी के बाद तीसरी इंक्वायरी कमेटी क्यों बनायी गयीं पहले ही आपने इंक्वायरी कमेटी क्यों नहीं बनायी? दूसरे आपने कहा कि एक बनायी, फिर दूसरी बनायी और तीसरी बनायी और जो अंतिम कमेटी बनायी, उससे पहले जो कमेटियां या इनवेस्टीगेशन के लिए नियुक्त अधिकारी थे, उनकी रिपोर्ट क्या है? उनकी रिपोर्ट आयी कि नहीं? अगर नहीं आयी तो क्यों नहीं आयी? महोदय, जानकारी यह है, कायदा यह है कि जहां पैट्रोल या कीरोसिन डाला जाता है टैंक में उससे पहले जो उसका फ्लश पॉइंट है, वह चैक किया जाता है। तो क्या फ्लश पाइंट चैक किया गया था या नहीं किया गया था क्योंकि वह पैट्रोल का अलग है कीरोसिन का अलग है डीजल का अलग है और मिलने के बाद इनका आना बंद हो जाता है। नंबर तीन य जिस वक्त ड्रम्स में डाला गया उसी वक आग लग गयी थी तो उसी समय उ रोका क्यों नहीं गया और अंतिम सवा

यह कि आपने कह दिया कि इन लोगों को एक लाख रुपया देंगे । तो यह रुपया कब तक दिया जाएगा और यह जो इंक्वायरी कमेटी बिठायी है उसकी रिपोर्ट कब आएगी उसको कितने दिनों का समय दिया गया है ? यह भी रिपोर्ट है कि पहले जब 27,000 लीटर पेट्रोल डाल दिया गया केरोसिन में, तो बजाय इसके कि गलती को बदलते, जब मिट्टी का तेल आया तो वह मिट्टी का तेल रिकार्ड ठीक करने के लिए उस वक्त पेट्रोल में डाल दिया गया । यह गलती क्यों हुई ? मेरा अंदाज यह है कि यह जानबूझकर किया गया है । यह उनकी प्रेक्टिस हमेशा रही है कि केरोसिन को पेट्रोल में मिला दिया जाए, लेकिन क्योंकि इस बार कुछ मात्रा ज्यादा हो गई, जिससे फ्लश पाइंट बढ़ गया और यह एक्सीडेंट वहां हो गया । तो क्या पहले ऐसे केसेज कहीं और नोटिस में आए हैं या नहीं आए हैं ? क्या ऐसी कोई घटना हिन्दुस्तान में कोटा के बाहर पहले कहीं हुई हैं या नहीं हुई हैं ? यह घटना अगर पहली बार हुई है तो इसके क्या कारण तो खैर दे ही सकते हैं, लेकिन जानबूझकर रिकार्ड जो बदले हैं, वह रिकार्ड पुलिस ने या उन्होंने जप्त किए हैं या नहीं किए हैं ? यह रिकार्ड, जैसा कहते हैं कि 27,000 लीटर डाल दिया, उसमें उन्होंने पेट्रोल डाल दिया, उसके बाद केरोसिन डाल दिया तो यह जो रिकार्ड है यह जप्त किया गया या नहीं, जो कि किया जाना चाहिए । यह रिकार्ड क्या आपके पास है या पुलिस के पास है या आखिर किसके पास है ?

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी (पश्चिमी बंगाल): माननीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने जो वक्तव्य दिया है, सबसे पहले तो इस जानलेवा, दुखजनक घटना के चलते जिसमें 27 बेगुनाह लोगों की मौतें हुई, मैं उनके प्रति अपनी हार्दिक श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करती हूं और उनके परिवार के लोगों को अपनी संवेदना व्यक्त करती हूं ।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय से मेरा सवाल यह है कि यह घटना, जो कि अधिकारियों और प्रशासन की जानलेवा लापरवाही का शर्मनाक उदाहरण है, क्या यह सच नहीं है कि इस घटना की पहली जानकारी 28 फरवरी को ही मिल गई थी ? उस समय अगर इस घटना की जांच की गई होती तो शायद हादसा इतना बड़ा नहीं होता । इस घटना में अब तक 27 लोग मारे जा चुके हैं और 100 से अधिक लोग घायल है, जिसके आंकड़े मंत्री महोदय ने अपने इस बयान में नहीं दिए । मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि इतनी बड़ी संख्या में लोग घायल हुए, बुरी तरह जख्मी हुए, बुरी तरह जले, क्या राजस्थान के उन पिछड़े हुए जिलों में पिछड़े हुए इलाकों में पर्याप्त संख्या में जलन उपचार इकाइयां हैं, जिससे उनका सही रूप में इलाज हो सके ? क्या इलाज की समुचित व्यवस्था की जा रही है ? इस बारे में मंत्री महोदय अपने स्पष्टीकरण के दौरान यथेष्ट जानकारी दें तो अच्छा रहेगा ।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह घटना केरोसिन में मिलावट की घटना है । मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहती हूं कि यह मिलावट किस स्तर पर हुई ? क्या मिलावट उस समय हुई, जब भारतीय तेल निगम से पेट्रोल की और केरोसिन की आपूर्ति हुई या उस डिपो में हुई जिस डिपो को उसकी आपूर्ति की गई ? मेरा सवाल यह भी है कि क्या भारतीय तेल निगम आपूर्ति करने से पहले इस बात की जांच नहीं करता, क्वालिटी की जांच नहीं करता फ्लश पाइंट की जांच नहीं करता ? अगर जांच करता है तो उसके रिकार्ड क्या मेन्टेन किए जाते हैं ? रिकार्ड रखे जाते हैं ? अगर रखे जाते हैं तो जो वाहन इस पेट्रोल और केरोसिन को लेकर गए, उसके रिकार्ड दर्ज हैं ? क्या उस डिपो में इसके रिकार्ड दर्ज हैं, जहां यह गये ? क्या डिपो में इस प्रकार के रिकार्ड रखे जाते हैं और क्या उनके फ्लश पाइंट की जांच की गई आपूर्ति से पहले ?

तीसरा सवाल यह है कि क्या यह सत्य है कि कांडला से जब 46 वैगनों में 27,000 लीटर पेट्रोल आया, जैसा कि अखबारों में खबर आई है कि यह पेट्रोल

गलती से केरोसिन के टैंक मे डाल दिया गया और वह मजदूर जो काम कर रहे थे, उनमें से कुछ मजदूरों को जब संदेह हुआ, जब पेट्रोल की गंध उनको आई तो उन्होंने अधिकारियों का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित करवाया कि यह पेट्रोलमें डालड। जा रहा है लेकिन अधिकारियों ने इसको नजरअंदाज किया ? शाम को जब रिकार्ड ठीक किए गए तो उन्होंने सिर्फ खातों में, जो इतनी बड़ी मिलावट की गई या इतनी बड़ी गड़बड़ी की गई, लेकिन खातों में यह दर्ज किया गया कि 27,000 लीटर पेट्रोल आया ।...उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं यह जानना चाहती हूं कि उस डिपो के जो मालिक थे, मंत्री महोदय ने अपने वक्तव्य में कहा है कि उनको गिरफ्तार किया गया है, मैं यह जानना चाहती हूं कि क्या उस डिपो के मैनेजर ने गिरफ्तारी के बाद आपको कोई सूचनाएं दी है ? इस बावत उन्होंने आपको क्या सूचनाएं दी हैं, उनकी कहां तक इस मामले में जिम्मेदारी थी, आप जरूर अवगत कराइएगा ?

इसके साथ ही मैं यह भी जानना चाहूंगी कि आपने तो एक जांच कमेटी का गठन किया है और उसके कुछ टर्म्स आफ रिफरेंस भी दिए है कि किन-किन मुद्दों को लेकर वह कमेटी जांच करेगी । बहरहाल, मैं आपसे यह जानना चाहती हूं कि इस दिशा में राजस्थान की सरकार ने अब तक क्या-क्या किया है ?

आपने एक लाख रुपए का कहा है, मैं आपसे यह भी जानना चाहती हूं, इस घटना में आपने सिर्फ यह कहा है कि 27 लोग मारे गए है, मै जानना चाहती हूं कि ये 27 लोग कौन थे ? जाहिर है कि हमारे देश में जो लोग केरोसीन का इस्तेमाल करते है वे गरीब लोग ही होंगे या महिलाएं होंगी, आज तक दहेज के कारण जिनके स्टोव फट जाते रहे और स्टोव का बहाना बनाकर जिनको मौत की आग में झोक दिया जाता रहा और आज हमारे अधिकारियों और प्रशासन की लापरवाही के चलते इतना बड़ा हादसा हुआ । मैं यह चाहती हूं कि इस तरह की घटना की पुनरावृत्ति फिर से न हो । तो आप उन अधिकारियों के विरुद्ध कौन सी कार्रवाई करने जा रहे है ? हालांकि आप यह कहेंगें कि चूंकि आपने जांच कमेटी गठित की है, उसके निष्कर्ष आएंगे , लेकिन जो आपके अधिकारी है, जो इस पर लीपा-पोती कर रहे है, जैसा कि आपने स्वंय अपने वक्तव्य में भी इस बात को कुबूल किया है कि लीपा-पोती करने की कोशिश की जा रही है, तो मैं जानना चाहती हूं कि उन अधिकारियों के विरुद्ध अब तक कोई कार्रवाई शुरू की गई है क्या कुछ अधिकारियों को गिरफ्तार किया किया गया है जिन्होंने कि जान-बूझकर इस लापरवाही को होने दिया ?

इसके साथ ही साथ मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह कहना चाहूंगी कि आप घटना की व्यापक जानकारी हमको दे क्योंकि यह सिर्फ औपचारिकता नहीं है कि हम वक्तव्य पर स्पष्टीकरण मांगें । इस तरह का हादसा हमारे देश में न हो और बेगुनाह लोग मारे न जाए, इसके प्रति अपनी जिम्मेदारी को समझते हुए आप व्यापक रूप में इस सदन को और हमारे देश के लोगों को विश्वास में लें । धन्यवाद ।

PROF. SAURIN BHATT ACHARYA (West Bengal): The so-called accidents involves two things. One, kerosene is essential for us and whan we read about the accident in the nawspapers, we found the wording so baffling saying 'Explosion of kerosene leading to death of so many persons. We wondered as to how an explosion could occur. No doubt some details have been given torus by the Minister in his statement. But my feeling is, if the information had come to the department earlier, perhaps some deaths could have been averted. New there has been a cover-up operation after the deaths on the 18th and those responsible for it tried to cover it up, which led to a greater disaster in the death of 27 people and more than 200 injured. There are certain other issues which have not been

clarified in the statement. At the same time, there is some contradiction when the statement says that there are two enquiries ordered. One is a top-level enquiry with the Safety Officer as the Chairman, and another enquiry is an internal enquiry. I do not know what would be the position of these two enquiries.

My second point is, it is a very volatile situation. A particular incident has taken place and an enquiry ordered but implications have not been thought of with regard to the terms of reference of the enquiry committees. There was an accident at Cochin.

Certain guidelines were provided regarding decerning of SKO, which is perhaps a technical term for ordinary kerosene. It is there in sub para (iv), which says:

> "Whether the IOC and BPC officials followed the instructions on quality control and safety precautions and other procedures prescribed in the operations manual, ■particularly, in view of the instructions issued after accidents in Cochin."

Since kerosene its distributed throughout the country, these guidelines or whatever you call them, must be .applicable all over the country. Therefore, after this Rajasthan accident, it has to be ensured that these instructions are followed strictly everywhere. This is necessary so . that the IOC officials are not again held responsible for the cover-up operations as has been done now—some of them have been held responsible and a few of them have been arrested also.

Secondly, the statement seems to be good-intentioned but it has a dangerous import. In paragraph 7 is is said:

> "In consultation with and with the assistance of State Government machinery, the contaminated SKO | is being withdrawn from the retailers and wholesalers by the IOC and being stored separately for further investigation, etc."

This means, the SKO is still in circulation. At the time of writing the statement, the work is still incomplete. This is more dangerous. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to ensure, if necessary by employing additional men, that such kerosene is withdrawn on a war footing and safely stored; that it is not in circulation any more. Otherwise, a doubt will arise that such a lethal thing was still in use and it might take further toll of lives. Let that not happen; this is my humble request to the hon Minister, through you, Sir.

Thank you.

SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD (Andhra Pradesh); Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it is really shocking to know that toy this accident 27 persons lost their lives and more than 225 persons were injured. I think the Government is not serious about this incident. The Government came to know quite some lime back about "some mix-up of petrol in kerosene in the operation of decanting of SKO and petrol from the railway tank wagons in the SKO and petrol tanks at Kota Depot of IOC". They came to know about this quite dome time back, in the month of February. Reports of the deaths during handling of kerosene at a retail dealer's premises were received on 18th February, 1994. So, it is not suddenly that this incident took place on the 9th March, So, what was the Government doing? This is not an ordinary accident. Some deaths were also involved. So, even in spite of the deaths that took place, after February 15 and up to February 18, fie Government did not take any action. So there was lethargy on the part of the Government and the IOC also. They did not take any action, even notice of it. whatever reports they have got. What

was the action taken, after this either by the IOC or the Government, during this period? I want to know that.

It seems there is laxity on the part of the Government. Moreover, accor ding to this statement, there was some Operations Manual. This also was issued after some accidents in Cochin. So the Government must have learnt some lessons after the Cochlin incident but, in spite of that, there was no supervision or control in preventing such activities by criminal elements.

I am not aware as to how much quantity was contaminated but, according to the statement, a total of 190 kilolitres of contaminated SKO was issued. How much still remains and what are the steps the Government is going to take to receive the remaining part, because it seems to be a large quantity? So, what steps has the Government taken to stop this and retrieve all the contaminated material?

My last point is, since this is a very gruesome accident the Government was not alert at least during the last one month. Except *viler* the telephonic message from the Rajasthan Government, they have not shown any major activity. That could have saved many lives also. But now I am not satisfied with the present setup of the Inquiry Committee. I thlink this requires a judicial inquiry, only by some High Court Judge. Though all these officers who are involved in the. preparation of the manuals, supervision and many Other . things may be sincere and good officers, to have .better transparency and objectivity, a judicial inquiry has to be constituted, and there should be a time limit also. It should not go on for months and months and it should be completed at the earliest time.

I think the Government should accept all these suggestions. Thank you.

श्रीमती सत्या बहिन (उत्तर प्रदेश): माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मैं पहले तो माननीय मंत्री जी का धन्यवाद करती हूं कि उन्होंने संसद का सत्र आज ही खुला और यहां पर वक्तव्य दे दिया और तत्काल कार्यवाही की हालांकि मेरा यह मानना है कि यह दुर्घटना 15 से 18 फरवरी को हुई थी तो इस दुर्घटना की सूचना 9 मार्च को राजस्थान सरकार ने क्यों दी ? इस बीच में सरकार कहां सोती रही ? क्यों यह लापरवाही हुई ? मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह भी पूछना चाहती हूं कि पहली घिंटना किस तारीख को हुई थी ? जहां तक अखबारों की सूचना है पहली दुर्घटना झालावाड़ और कोटा में हुई जहां ज्यादातर मरने वालो में महिलाएं है, जो घरों में कुप्पी जलाती है या छोटा-मोटा काम करती है या स्टोव पर खाना बनाती है । उनकी मृत्यु को नियति मानकर उनकी उपेक्षा की गई और इस पर कार्यवाही नहीं की गई । मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि इसमें देरी का क्या कारण है ? क्या राज्य सरकार द्वारा इसमें सही जांच नहीं होने देने में भी लापरवाही बरती गई है ? दूसरे जो खुदरा डीलर हैं, विक्रेता हैं उनके यहां से जो घटना हुई क्या उसकी जांच की गई या उसको सामान्य दुर्घटना मान कर कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की गई ? मैं यह जानना चाहती हूं जांच किस तरह से हुई ? जो थोक विक्रेता हैं, खुदरा विक्रेता है, तेल का वितरण करते हैं उनके लिए कोई सुरक्षातंत्र तो होगा, सुरक्षा संबंधी कोई दिशा निर्देश तो दिये गये होंगे इंडियन ऑयल कारपोरेशन की तरफ से या मंत्रालय की तरफ से ? यदि दिये गये हैं तो उन दिशा निर्देशों का सही पालन किया गया है या नहीं ? इसकी जांच समय-समय पर की जाती है या नहीं ? इसके साथ ही मैं मंत्री महोदय से इस बात की भी जानकारी चाहती हूं कि जो पहले जांच की गई थी क्या उसमें अधिकारियों की कोई गिरफ्तारियां हुई या उनके खिलाफ कोई कार्रवाई की गई ? जैसा इस बयान में दिया हुआ है गलतियां छिपाने की कोशिश की गई तो मैं

जानना चाहती हूं कि रिकार्ड में कोई हेरफेरी की गई या नहीं की गई ? गई या नहीं की गई ? जरूर की गई होगी । उसको सुरक्षित किस तरह से लायेंगे ?

अब मैं मुआवजे के संबंध में जानना चाहती हूं । पीड़ितों को राहत देने के लिए श्री महोदय ने एक लाख रुपये मृत व्यक्तियों के संबंधों को देने की घोषणा की है । यह बहुत अच्छी बात है । लेकिन इसमें घायलों को दी जाने वाली सहायता का कोई उल्लेख नहीं किया गया । मैं यह पूछना चाहती हूं कि घायलों को आप कितने रुपये दे रहे हैं ? दे रहे हैं या नहीं दे रहे हैं ? मैं यह भी पूछना चाहती हूं कि यह एक लाख रुपये जो दिये जा रहे हैं वह क्या मंत्रालय की तरफ से दिये जा रहे हैं या राज्य सरकार की तरफ से दिये जा रहे हैं ? अगर मंत्रालय की तरफ से दिये जा रहे हैं तो राज्य सरकार की तरफ से भी कोई सहायता दी जा रही है या नहीं ? साथ ही जो घायल हैं उनका इलाज भी हो रहा होगा तो उस इलाज में केन्द्रीय सरकार और पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय उसका खर्च वहन कर रहा है या नहीं कर रहा है ? इन सब बातों का जवाब आप से जानना चाहती हूं ।

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): The hon. Minister has tried his best to share the information with us. In *spite of* that there are so many information missed in the statement, In paragraph 6, tine 5, he has said:

> "...it appears that there was some mix-up of petrol in kerosene in the operation of decanting of SKO and petrol from the railway tank wagons in the SKO and petrol tanks at Kota Depot of IOC."

What is the meaning of 'some' mix-up, because according to Press reports it is not some mix-up, it is 27,000 litres of petrol? Instead of decanting in the petrol storage tank, they had decanted it in the kerosene tank. Sut new they put it as "some" mix -up. That is Why 1 would like to know whether the Press report is correct. If that is so, why has this not been mentioned in the statement?

Then regarding the operation, the statement says:

> "It appeal's that after initial mistake and reports of death, IOC official at Kota Depot tried to cover up the mistake in the decanting operation, in the depot were between 15th February and 18th February, 1994.

The doubt that he mentions in the statement is about "15th February and 18th February" as the period of decanting operation. But according to the Press reports of today it is not so. The Hindustan Times, at page ' says:

> On February 14, a total of 46 wagons had arrived from Kandla, in which 20 were carrying kerosene, 12 were carrying dfesel and in the remaining was petrol."

This report says it was 14th, as if it had already happened. Why I want to say is supposing we say on 15th the decanting operation actually took place and when the case goes to the court, they will refuse the case, because there the people who have done the mistake will state according to the statement submitted in Parliament, they will say it was between 15th and 18th.
7.00 P.M,

In between there was no such decanting operation. Had there been decanting operation they could have easily escaped.

The Rajasthan police have registered criminal cases against the officials of the IOC operating the Kota Depot. On Which date these cases have been registered has not been mentioned in the statement. The Central Government was informed of it only on the 9th March. The Minister has

said, 'Reports of the deaths during handling of kerosene at a retail dealer's premises were received on 18th February, 1994. The inciderit was however not pursued to its logical end treating it as an accident. It appears that after initial mistake and reports of deaths, IOC officials al Kota Depot tried to cover up the mistake.." If the State Government had received the information on the 18th February itself, why did they keep the imformation to themselves and not shared it with the Central Government until the 9th March?

The Minister further said, "Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas will fully cooperate in the investigation of the cases by the State Police and also Lake stringent action against the guilty officials found responsible for negligence and non-observance of prescribed safety precautions, etc." This is not negligence. Anything happening by an error is called negligence. This is not an that error oc curred. But this is a mistake which has been committed. A coolie who was there had informed the official that when the decanting operation was taking place he felt the smell of petrol. After having informed the higher officials, he was asked to carry on with his job. This is what has been reported in the Press. That means purposefully it has been dbne. When they have transferred 27,000 litres of kerosene to the petrol storage tank, this incident took place. Earlier in the State of Tamil Nadu also, kerosene used to be mixed with diesel. Now, it is not being done because the price of kerosene is more than the price of diesel. When this incident took place, the Government should not take It as a small matter. After the matter has been reported to the Central Government, I am glad that they have taken some appropriate action.

I convey my heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved families. I am glad that the Government of India has sanctioned Rs. 1 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased. I appreciate it. How much so has been contaminated and how much is still available with the Government? What is the proposal available With the Government of India to dispose it or.' In which way are they going to dispose it of? I want answers to my questions from the Minister.

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम : (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय के पैरा 2 के थोड़े से हिस्से को मैं पढ़ना चाहता हूं ।

..... Industry Safety Directorate were directed to proceed to Rajasthan immediately and investigate..."

दूसरा आपने कहा कि :

".....Northern Region of IOC and officers from Head Office, IOC, Bombay also reached Kota and carried out investigations." Thirdly, it is stated, ".... Northern Region to conduct the enquiry and find out the cause of accidents and the contamination of SKO, etc."

"To establish the cause (s) of deaths

इतनी तत्परता, इतनी जल्दी जांच समितियां बिठाने का क्या मंतलब था कि --तीन तीन समितियां बनायीं जांय ? अगर बिठायीं गई थी तो उन जांच समतियों का निष्कर्ष क्या निकाला ? फिर आपने यह आखिर में जो कहा कि

"Accordingly, an Enquiry Committee has been constituted by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas,...".

यह आखिर में है । हमारे किसी लायक दोस्त ने इशारा भी दिया था और इस में दीगर अस्पेक्ट्स भी हैं जहुत से, जिसके रेफरेंस का पहला टर्म है

and other injuries due to the accidents on account of use of kerosene."

It requires medical jurisprudence. A judicial member is supposed to know much about it.

यह जो आफिसर्ज की कमेटी है, it does not include even a single member from the judicial side.

इसका क्या मतलब है ? क्या फिर यह लीपा-पोती करना चाहते हैं, उसी डिपार्टमेंट के लोग हैं और उसी डिपार्टमेंट की कमी के कारण सब कुछ हुआ है । तीन जांच समितियों का निष्कर्ष क्या है ? इसके इलावा क्या आज इसमें कोई ज्युडिशियल मैम्बर शामिल करेंगे ? आपके जो टर्म्स आफ रेफ्रेंस हैं "To establish the cause(s) of deaths".

इसके लिए मडिकल सार्टीफिकेट ही काफी होता है जिसमें काज आफ डेथ लिखा रहता है कि डियु टू बर्न । अब अगर यह है तो यह तो खास नहीं है। यह टर्म्स आफ रेफ्रेंस में आपने इन्क्लूड क्यों नहीं किया ।

At the initial stage,

जब 18 फरवरी को आपको जानकारी मिल गई कि आग लगने के कारण मौतें हुई हैं एक डीलर के यहां, तो एक्शन क्यों नहीं लिया गया ? इसको भी शामिल करना चाहिये था । शुरुआत तो वहां से ही हो गई थी जिसको आपने स्वीकार किया है । तीसरी बात, मैं पूछना चाहता हूं जिन लोगों की मौतें हुई हैं, यह कहावत है कि दूध का जला छांछ को भी फूंक-फूंक कर पीता है, अब वो मिट्टी का तेल लेने में भी डरेंगे । क्या आप अपने कोटे से उनकी रसोई गैस की व्यवस्था कर देंगे ? अगर वह नहीं ले सकते, अगर उनके पास पैसा नहीं है तो एक-एक चूल्हा और एक साल की गैस, आप एक लाख रुपये के इलावा इन परिवारों को दे देंगे, क्या इसकी घोषणा आप यहां पर करेंगे ? (व्यवधान) मैडम, आप हर बात में राजनीति मत करें । कैरोसिन और पेट्रोलियम यह केन्द्र सरकार के मामले हैं। इनका राज्य सरकारों से कोई मतलब नहीं है। यह जितने भी डिपो अलाट होते हैं, यह सब केन्द्रीय सरकार की तरफ से होते हैं । (व्यवधान) आप सुन लीजिये। थोड़ी सी जानकारी हासिल कर लीजिये । सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट अलाट करती है। यह सब सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट का मामला है । मान्यवर, कार्यवाही दो प्रकार की होती है । एक तो यह होती है कि जो क्रिमिनल एक्शन है ।

that action has been started by the Rajasthan policy.

लेकिन दूसरा एक्शन होता है डिपार्टमेंटल आपके इस बयान में इसका उल्लेख नहीं है ।

What departmental action has been taken against these erring officers?

क्या यह आपकी इच्छाशक्ति में कमी को जाहिर नहीं करता ? सब से पहले they are put under suspension.

और बहुत सी बातें हैं जो डिपार्टमेंटल एक्शन उन सब आफिसर्ज के खिलाफ होता है ।

Would you assure this House that you are taking departmental action?

अब अन्तिम बात है, यह सारी घटनाएं, दुर्घटनाएं और यह तमाम जो मौतें हमारे देश में हो रही हैं, सब से बड़ी दिक्कत यह है सरदार जी कि कोई भी बड़े स्तर का अधिकारी इसकी जिमेदारी को नहीं ओढ़ता । मंत्री जी, आपकी सरकार में जितने मामले हुए, किसी एक मामले में भी कोई मंत्री अपनी जिम्मेदारी ओढ़ने जा रहा है या नहीं, अगर जिम्मेदारी नहीं ओढ़ेंगे तो फिर इस प्रकार की घटनाएं कैसे रुकेंगी ?

That is also one of the courses to be adopted.

कोई जिम्मेंदारी नहीं ओढ़ता । 27-27 आदमी मर गये, दो-दो सौ आदमी घायल हो जाएं । आप दिखावे के लिए ही इस्तीफा दे देते कि मेरे मंत्रालय के कारण यह हुआ है, मनमोहन सिंह की तरह आप इस्तीफा भी वापिस कर लेते ।

Should you not take the responsibility on your shoulders? That is all.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, this gruesome accident is an act of both omission and commission as per the Minister's statement. It is stated in the statement that the Executive Direcor, Northern Region of IOC and officers from

Head Office, IOC, Bombay also reached Kota and carried out investigations. What are their findings? I would like to know this from the hon. Minister. And on the basis of those findings, what effective steps have been taken in this regard? It is mentioned that in view of the instructons issued after the accident in Cochin, certain steps have been taken to implement those instructions. What are those instructions and what steps have been taken to see that these instructions are implemented? I would like to know about the target date and the time—frame to submit the report of the Inquiry Committee. I think it has been mentioned in the terms of reference. About 25 persons got burnt and about 85 persons are still in the hospital. What is the percentage of burns in each case and what is their present condition? Is there anybody critical at this juncture? How effective is the treatment? It is common practice that 'diesel and petrol are being adulterated with kerosene but it is the other way round. Day in and day out, we are coming across various advertisements in the Press that due to the liberalisation policy, a lot of kerosene oil is being imported and I am very much afraid that under the guise of liberalisation and in order to score a point against each other in this *Tamasha* of importing kerosene, diesel, LPG, etc., they may go round even without the necessary infrastructure and precautionary measures to prevent all these aocidents. What effective steps have the Government taken to see that such acidents may not be repeated?

श्री मलखान मीणा : (राजस्थान) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, राजस्थान के हाड़ौती संभाग में कैरोसीन में मिलावट की घटना ने और उसमें लगी चिंगारी लोगों की भावनाओं को दुखित क दिया । आज इस सदन में केन्द्रीय सरकार की बात करें या राज्य सरकार की बात करें – 27 आदमी जलकर मर गये, ५० घायल हो जायें और 85 व्यक्ति अस्पतालों में मृत्यु से जूझें और सरकारों पर दोष देने वाली बात इस सदन के अन्दर करें, यह फिर न्याय की बात नहीं कर सकते हैं । इस तेल, कैरोसीन की मिलावट में इंडियन आयल कारपोरेशन के अधिकारियों की लापरवाही भी हो सकती है, और है साथ ही साथ राज्य सरकार का जो रसद विभाग है उसकी भी यह जिम्मेदारी है कि तेल के वितरण के साथ जो पहली घटना 18 फरवरी को हुई और उसकी सूचना उसको मिल गयी– 19 फरवरी को रसद विभाग कोटा ने कैरोसीन डिपो के प्रबंधक को यह इत्तिला भी दे दी कि कोटा के अन्दर इस में आग लगने से आदमी की मृत्यु हो गयी उसके बावजूद भी क्यों नहीं रसद विभाग ने कुछ किया । 9 तारीख तक लोग जलते रहे, उस कैरोसीन तेल से मरते रहे । 9 तारीख तक रसद विभाग ने क्या-क्या कार्यवाही इस कैरोसीन डिपो के कर्मचारियों के खिलाफ की । किस-किस को इत्तिला की ? क्या रसद विभाग के कर्मचारी इस बात के दोषी नहीं हैं । यदि वे चाहते तो रोक सकते थे इन घटनाओं को । डिपो से गलती से 27 हजार लिटर पेट्रोल कैरोसीन में मिल गया और डिपो से चला गया । लेकिन क्षेत्र में रोकने के लिये 18 फरवरी की घटना को मद्देनजर रखकर रसद विभाग चाहता .....। तो इतनी बड़ी कैज्युलिटी, 27 आदमी मरने की कैज्यूलिटी 125 घायल होने की स्थिति पैदा नहीं होती । तो मैं मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या राज्य सरकार ने आप को केवल इंडियन आयल कार्पोरेशन की लापरवाही संबंध में ही बताया है या रसद विभाग के कर्मचारियों की लापरवाही के बारे में क्या कार्यवाही राज्य सरकार ने की, इसकी जानकारी है ? मुझे ऐसा लगता है उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, कि राजस्थान की सरकार इस घटना को केन्द्रीय सरकार के माथे मढ़ना चाहती है जबकि वास्तविक दोष राज्य सरकार का है, जो सन दिनों में 18 फरवरी से 9 मार्च के बीच में राज्य सरकार शादियों में ब्लैक

थी । एक राज्य सरकार के मंत्री की शादी में 20–20 हजार आदमियों को खाना हो रहा है, जिसमें मुख्य मंत्री जा रहे हैं । उन्हें उन मरने वाले लोगों की चिंता नहीं है और इसके अन्दर कैसे लोग मरे हैं ? जो गांवों में रहने वाले निचले तबके के लोग हैं, जो गरीब हैं और वे ही मिट्टी के तेल का उपयोग करते हैं । साथ ही साथ, आपने मरने वालों के लिये एक-एक लाख रुपये देने के निर्देश दिये हैं । क्या उनके जो उपचार हो रहे हैं, जो उपचार किये जा रहे हैं, उनका जो दवाइयों का खर्चा है या अस्पताल के अन्दर जो खर्चा है, क्या उनका मुफ्त इलाज किया जा रहा है ? जो घटनायें हो रही थीं 20 दिन तक उनमें उन जले हुये लोगों की राज्य सरकार ने क्यों नहीं ली? साथ ही मंत्री जी ने इससेवक्तव्यसेनें बिल्कुल साफ शब्दों में कहा है इस वक्तव्य में कहीं कोई बात छिपाई नहीं है । पुलिस की सूचना के अनुसार इंडियन आयल कारपोरेशन के 4 कर्मचारी, प्रबंधक सहित गिरफ्तार हुये हैं । धारा 304, 120 के अन्दर उनको गिरफ्तार किया है, लेकिन मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि इन दुर्घटनाओं के कारण कितने मामले अब तक दर्ज हुये हैं ?

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इंडियन आयल कारपोरेशन मिलावट की खानापूर्ति इंडियन आयल कारपोरेशन के कर्मचारियों की लापरवाही, जान-बूझकर तो की नहीं है यह गलती जान-बूझकर नहीं की है । जान-बूझकर इसलिये नहीं की कि पेट्रोल का जो भाव है वह तो ज्यादा है और मिटी के तेल का भाव कम है, इसलिये जान-बूझकर तो अधिकारी मिलाने से रहे उनकी कुछ गलतियां, कुछ लापरवाही ऐसी है अनदेखी रही है जिसके कारण यह घटना हुई । लेकिन इसमें इंडियन आयल कारपोरेशन के कर्मचारियों का कुछ दोष है जब उनको रसद विभाग ने 19 तारीख को यह रिपोर्ट दे दी कि इस प्रकार की घटना कोटा के अन्दर 18 तारीख को हुई है क्या उसके बाद ने कैरोसीन टैंक कैरोसीन डिपो में भरा गया था या नहीं और कुल कितना कैरोसिन कोटा, झालावाड़, बारां, बूंदी क्षेत्र के अन्दर वितरित किया गया? साथ ही, मंत्री जी से यह निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि इस घटना के अन्दर किसी भी दोषी आदमी को छोड़ा नहीं जाये, साथ ही मृतक के परिवार के लोगों के लिये जो एक लाख रुपये देने की बात है । यह राशि राज्य सरकार, आयल इंडिया कारपोरेशन और भारत सरकार तीनों मिलकर यदि लाख कर दें तो उन परिवारों को कुछ अधिक आर्थिक मदद मिल सकेगी । दूसरे इस गंभीर घटना में जो घायल व्यक्ति है, उनको भी कुछ राशि आप उपलब्ध करायें, मैं यही निवेदन करना चाहता हूं ।

श्री एस. एस. अहलुवालिया : (बिहार) उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि यह कैरोसिन तेल क्या इंपोर्टेड था और अगर इंपोर्टेड था तो उसका ओरिजन क्या था? दूसरे मैं यह भी जानना चाहूंगा कि अभी तक बाम्बे से इंडियन आयल कारपोरेशन के लोग और नादर्न रीजन और सेंट्रल रीजन से लोग जाकर वहां इक्वायरी कर चुके हैं और जैसा कि सब जानते हैं कि तेल का अनुपात नापने के लिये उसे किसी वजन की मशीन पर तोला नहीं जाता वरन् उसके वाल्यूम से उसका कैलकुलेशन होता है कि कितना तेल है । तो क्या कोई ऐसी चीज सामने आई है जिसमें कि कैरीसिन तेल में मिलावट कर के, आइल एक्सपेंशन करके उसका वाल्यूम बढ़ाने की कोशिश की गयी है जिसके कारण उसकी फ्लेम, उसकी जो कैलोरिफिक वैल्यू है, वह बढ़ गयी है या फ्लश पाइंट डिक्रीज हो गया है । तो कोई ऐसी चीज उसमें मिलायी गयी है, क्या इस बारे में कुछ इंक्वायरी की गयी है क्योंकि इसके पीछे डीजल और कैरीसिन के बारे में और पेट्रोल की मिलावट के बारे में पेट्रोल अनुसंधान केन्द्र ने बहुत सारे अनुसंधान करके यह बतलाया है कि कैरोसिन का तेल इस रंग का होगा जिससे कि मिलावट करने से पता चल जायेगा या डीजल का रंग इस तरह का होगा और उसमें मिलावट करने से पता चल

जायेगा । तो क्या ऐसी मिलावट से बचने के लिये इन भ्रष्टाचारी मिलावट खोर लोगों ने कोई ऐसे कैमिकल्स का प्रयोग किया है जिसके कारण कि उसका फ्लश पाइंट बढ़ गया ? महोदय, हमारे सामने तो यह आ रहा है कि वहां पेट्रोल टैंक में कैरोसिन तेल मिल गया था । अगर वह मिल गया था तो उस टैंक के अधिकारियों ने उसका वितरण करने से पहले फ्लेम टैस्ट क्यों नहीं लिया ?

दूसरे, महोदय यह सिर्फ हमारी लोडिंग और अन-लोडिंग की गलती ही है या कोई अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय षडयंत्र का हिस्सा है क्योंकि पाकिस्तान की खुफिया एजेंसी आई०एस०आई० की जो चीजें सामने आई हैं, अभी जो उनके दस्तावेज पकड़े गये हैं हाल में उनके आतंकवादियों के हाथों से, उनमें यह पता लगा था कि पूरे नार्थ इंडिया की स्टेटस में गड़बड़ी फैलाना चाहते थे और उन गड़बड़ियों में गांवों में, देहातों में, कुछ ऐसे हालात पैदा करना चाहते थे जिसमें कि किसी तरह की भी मदद न पहुंच सके । इसलिऐं महोदय मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या यह एक अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय षडयंत्र का हिस्सा भी हो सकता है ? हमारे गृह मंत्री जी भी बैठें हैं, मैं उनसे निवेदन करूंगा कि अगर यह हो सकता है तो उस पर वह कार्यवाही करने की कोशिश करें । धन्यवाद ।

SHRI MISA R. GANESAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, as per the statement there are now three inquiries going on into this matter. The first is by the internal committee, the second is by a highlevel committee and the third lis by the State Police of Rajasthan in a criminal case. I would like to know from the Minister as to what happened to the internal committee after the appolintment of the high—level committee. If para 5 of the statement is true, the State Police of Rajasthan has registered a criminal case against the officers of the IOC at Kota. The last sentence states:

"According to the police, the officials have admitted their failure and responsibility for issuing contaminated SKO from the depot."

If it is so and if a criminal case has been registered by the State Police. then these inquiry committees are not at all necessary because there cannot be two punishments for the same offence. If they are convicted in the criminal case, then they cannot continue as officers in the IOC. If an inquiry committee is also going on when a criminal case is going on, the principle of res *judicata* will come into play, I would like to know from the hon. Minister on whose report he is going to rely finally, whether on the internal committee's report or the high-level committee's report or on the State Police's criminal case.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, एक बात मैं इसमें जोड़ दूं कि रेलवे के वैगन थे तो क्या रेलवे से भी यह जानकारी प्राप्त की जायगी कि क्या यह वैगन आइडेंटिफाई थे कि यह पेट्रोल का है, यह डीजल का है या यह कैरोसिन का है ? यह जानकारी जरूरी है कि क्या उसके पेपर में ही गलती हुई या वैगन ही आइडेंटिफाई ठीक नहीं हुए ? तो रेलवे वालों से भी पूछा जाना चाहिए, उनको इन्क्वायरी में शामिल किया जाना चाहिए ताकि पता चले कि उन्होंने आइडेंटिफाई किया था कि नहीं कि इस वैगन में क्या है ?

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I would like to make certain observations which will clear most of the points which have been raised by the hon. Members.

Sir, one point was raised by most of the Members. They wanted to know why there are so many committees and why there are three committees. The IOC Committee was an internal Committee which was a fact-finding technical Committee initially

(Capt. Satish Sharma)

in touch with the State Government. When the Ministry came to know the magnitude of the damage done, it *set* up a high level Committee consisting of not only IOC but also representa- there of outside compnay as to enquire into this matter so that we could fix the *re*sponsibility and find out who were negligent. This Committee has been directed to submoils report In 15 days' time. This Committee will s brnit its report wirhin 15 days

Then some hon. Members also wanted to know about the records. I would like to assure the Members chat all the records any been seized by the State police. The documentation room at the Kota Depot has also been sealed. So, nobody can pilfer the records. They are very much in place. What happaned on the 15th February? A rake containing kerosene, motor spirit and HSD was received at Kota Depot. One motor spirit wagon was wrongly decanted into kerosene tank at the IOC depot, Kota. Like many hon. Members.-have mentioned one hears of kerosene being added into motor spirit petrol. But it is not the other way round because it does not make any economic sense. It is quite clear that it was not a question of somebody who was trying to make a buck. It was an accident. This is how it started. Let us try to understand the sequence of events. It started as an accident due to carelessness and negligence.

Hon. Members have also mentioned one very valid point. They have asked why, after this carelessness which caused contamination of kerosene—and we had an accident there where the initial explosion took place and today is the 15th March.—no action has been taken so far. It is a very valid point. Let us try to understand what really happened there. What *prima facie,* I understand, happened was this. Sir, actually they were decanting kerosene at the distributor's premises. One fellow was merely .smoking there. That is what the report says. Then explosion took place there. Unfortunately, this was a matter which was being handled—I don't want to politicise this issue; please don't misunderstand me—by the State police. They, to the best of their understanding felt that it caught five because somebody was smoking. So, it was a localised accident. They did not realise the implications of what was going on. Basically, the flame point of motor spirit is much lower than that of kerosene. In the case of kerosene, it is about 35 degrees centigrade. Motor spirit is much more volatile. Had they pursued this matter to its logical end, I think many lives could have been saved. You are absolutely right. Bui this is exactly the sequence of events, of what happened on that day. It was only then that everybody realised, not only the IOC officials but the Ministry, myself, everybody, that something had gone wrong seriously

SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Mr. Minister, will you please tell me whether the officers were informed that such and such incident had taken place? It has been reported in. the papers that the officers had been informed by the labourers. Is this correct? If it is correct, then many questions arise our of it.

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: This is a specific query that you are raising. My understanding is that, all at the depot, had been arrested. They are in jail right now. I do not know which persons you are talking about. The State police has already arrested them. They are in jail. That reminds me about another issue. Some Members wanted to know what action I had taken against them. The rule is, if somebody is in jail for more than 48 hours, he stands suspended anyway. If there is any other dimension to what you are saying, I will find out. more facts and let you know about it personally. As I mentioned in the statement, the acident had oc-

curred at the retail dealer's premises on the 18th February, 1994. The State police investigated it and came to the conclusion that the accident had occurred due to negligence. It was a serious mistake. The Important thing right now is whether there is any contaminated kerosene still out there. People should be made aware of it so that no further damage is done. That is important. I also share that concern. Door-to-Door information has been given so that people do not use the contaminated SKO. The retrieval process is on. A total of 190 Ids of contaminated SKO has been retrieved. That process is on. Fresh supplies have gone there. Our IOC officials are in touch with the State Government. They will start distributing the fresh stock at an appropriate time. A preliminary enquiry has been undertaken by the IOC. An enquiry Committee has also been constituted. The investigation is directed towards finding out whether the contamination of kerosene took place while it was being transported or at the wholesale point or at the retail point. All these aspects are being looked into. The investigation is on. As the investigation progresses. I shall keep the House informed.

SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Is there a practice of checking the flame point at the depot?

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: It is a normal practice to check the flame point at the time of its arrival. But as we know, mistakes do happen. They put petrol into kerosene and then they wanted to cover it up. Please try to understand. That is the genesis of the whole thing. It is a standard practice to check the flame point at the depot. This is practised all over the country. I have been as honest as I can. I have put all the facts before you. This is what happened. Now we have to make sure that an incident like this; does not occur in future.

SHRI M. A. BABY (Kerala): Sir, with your permission, I would like to seek a specific clarification. The hon. Minister had stated in regard to disciplinary action being taken against those who were found guilty that if somebody was incarcerated for more than 48 hours, he automatically stood suspended. Here, Sir, something more than this is required because what he has mentioned is something that happens automatically. People who were at fault must be made accountable for it. We do support and protest the interests of the workers and tha employees. But if they were guilty, they should feel the pinch of it. It is not enough that something happens to them automatically but they should be held responsible for their fault and action should be taken against them as per the enquiry report Sir, it is an autonomous institution, a quasi-Goyernment . institution. So, the Ministry cannot do it. It is only the IOC or other institutions which will have to do it. I would liks to know whether the Government has, at least, given some instructions to this effect, especially after a serious discussion by the Members of both the Houses. This is what I wanted to know from the hon. Minister.

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA; Sir, let me assure, through you, the hon. Member that I can give him my word, my assurance, that whoever is found guilty as per the inquiry, besides the person who are in jail—and no matter how higher—ups these people are—action will be taken against them. The enquiry is on; it is underway and let us wait for the inquiry to be over.

The other point which was made is also very relevant but I do not want to take cover of that. It is about what the ISI has been doing and what its plans are in North India. We are in touch with the various agencies to have a look at that aspect. And regarding the question, which, I think, Mr. Ahluwalia asked, the SKO came from the Koyali Refinery of Gujarat. And, on other sensitive matters which

[Capt. Satish Sharma]

you discussed, I would like to say that we are keeping track of these things.

Sir, the most important thing is, these poor, innocent, people, for no fault of theirs, died in the accident and many people have sustained severe burn injuries. The top burn-specialists from the Safdurjung Hospital, Delhi, have gone there and their treatment is being taken care of. The doc tors who have gone there are considered to be the top specialists of the country. If there *13* anything more that needs to be done, in addition to the compensation being given to them. which I have already mentioned on the floor of this august House, if any additional help, specially to those undergoing treatment for their burns is required, I will personally see to it that they are taken care of directly by the IOC, which is responsible. This I am assuring the Members.

With these words, I thank all the Members for having given some very valuable suggestions and I can only assure them that the inquiry is on and that nobody will be spared, and the persons who were responsible for this would be punished. This assurance is categorical, Sir, and I have nothing more to add.

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

THE COFFEE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1994

SECRETARY-GENERAL; Sir, I have to report to the House the follow ing message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-Genoral of the Lok Sabha: —

> "In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure- and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the Coffee (Amendment) Bill, 1994. as passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 15th March. 1994."

Sir, I lay a copy of the Bill on the Table of the House.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI): The House stands adjourned till 11 a.m. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at thirty nine minutes past seven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Wednesday, the 16th March, 1994.